

Fairview

February 18, 2025

Senate Health and Human Services Finance Committee

Re: SF971 – Decriminalization of Medical Errors by Health Care Providers

Dear Chair Wiklund and Committee Members:

On behalf of Fairview Health Services (Fairview), we want to express our strong support for SF971. Across our ten hospitals and more than fifty clinics, our care teams make decisions every day that impact the lives of the thousands of patients who entrust us with their care. At Fairview, our teams are constantly seeking to improve the systems and processes we have in place to ensure that we can provide the highest quality and safest care to our patients. Every day we entrust our frontline providers to make split-second decisions in high-pressure environments, and we must ensure they feel safe to report errors so we can improve systems and prevent future mistakes.

One of the core principles in health care is Just Culture—an approach that promotes transparency and learning rather than blame when systemic failures contribute to unintended mistakes. However, when health care providers fear criminal prosecution for errors, they become less likely to report them. This makes health care less safe.

This legislation is critical because it:

- Encourages Transparency & Reporting – When providers fear criminal charges, errors go unreported, making health care less safe.
- Supports System-Wide Improvements – We should focus on fixing flawed processes rather than punishing individuals for systemic failures.
- Helps Retain Health Care Workers – Criminalizing mistakes discourages people from entering or staying in the profession.

We know that highly skilled and dedicated health care colleagues can still make errors, and we must strike a balance between accountability and compassion. This legislation promotes a culture of transparency and learning, encouraging individuals to report mistakes so that systems can be improved and future errors prevented, ultimately making our health care system safer for everyone.

We appreciate the opportunity to share our support of SF 971 on behalf of the thousands of nurses, physicians, advanced practice providers, and allied health professionals across our health system.

Sincerely,



Jaya Kumar, MD, MBA
EVP, Chief Medical Officer
Fairview Health Services



Darlene Spiegelberg, MAN, BSN, RN
EVP, Chief Nurse Executive
Fairview Health Services